New York State Integrated Pest Management Program

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Microbial Products for Pythium Root Rot Prevention in Poinsettias

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Abstract: Greenhouse IPM implementation and demonstration projects have taken place in Erie, Orange, and Ulster Counties for many years. They have proven to be effective learning tools for growers, IPM specialists and extension educators. In the past there was a focus on general scouting procedures and whitefly monitoring. Growers have implemented these procedures and are looking for more information on managing root rots in poinsettias.

Pythium fungi commonly cause root rot on many greenhouse flower crops, causing reductions in crop quality and even plant death. These fungi are found in the environment and are also exchanged between growers on plant material, so their presence cannot be altogether avoided through sanitation practices alone. Pythium root rot can cause serious losses if not managed. Current recommendations include several preventive chemical fungicides. Growers would like an environmentally-friendly alternative such as the use of microbials. In two out of three locations in this study, microbial treatments showed improved root health compared to the control poinsettia plants.

For a printed copy of the entire report, please contact the NYS IPM office at:

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